



# Women and Minority Veterans Quarterly Newsletter

July - September 2008

## A Message From Deputy Secretary Barbara Ward



I had the opportunity of attending the Women Veterans Summit in Washington DC from June 20<sup>th</sup> through the 22<sup>nd</sup>. The Summit was well-organized and full of updates on various topics and issues that are of importance to women veterans.

The overall summit was excellent and the recommendations from the Summit will be posted on The Center of Women Veterans section of the USDVA website at:

<http://www1.va.gov/womenvet/page.cfm?pg=70>.

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## Meeting “Doc”

By Linden Feil  
OEF/OIF Program Manager  
VBA, Oakland Regional Office

In my role as the Operation Enduring Freedom / Operation Iraqi Freedom (OEF/OIF) Program Manager, I make weekly visits to Travis Air Force Base to greet combat injured soldiers coming back from Iraq and Afghanistan. In the past, the war-wounded were almost always men. But this war is different; I'm seeing women, as well as men, with combat injuries. I would like to share one young woman's story with you.

She served as a Navy corpsman assigned to a Marine Corps unit in Iraq. She earned the respect of Marines she cared for, and as is the tradition, they called her “Doc.” She said the heat was unbearable at times; and there was never any relief from the sounds of people yelling, explosions, and gunfire around the compound. Occasionally stray rocket propelled grenades (RPGs) or mortar rounds found their way into their compound. She had a close call before with a mortar round, and then one day she was just unlucky enough to be outside when an RPG hit close to her, throwing her across the compound into a wall. She suffered severe shrapnel injuries and fractures, including her spine.

Even after being injured, she begged the commander to let her stay. She spent 10 days after her injury still trying to tend to the Marines – first from a gurney, and then a wheelchair – until her wounds made it necessary for her to be evacuated.

**continued on next page**

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 2 National Survey of Women Veterans
- 3 Lt. Dunwoody Nominated To Receive 4<sup>th</sup> Star
- 4 Child Care for Veterans
- 4 **CRB Conducts Survey on Women Veterans**
- 4 CA Native American Day
- 5 The Soldiers Project
- 6 Legislation Sponsored by CDVA
- 7 Women Veterans Conference
- 8 Members Appointed to Mexican American Memorial
- 9 Upcoming Events Calendar

## Message from Deputy Secretary Ward cont:

One of the unanticipated events was the viewing of the documentary, “*Lioness*,” during a reception held at the Women in Military Service for America Memorial. *Lioness* is the story of female soldiers in an engineering unit, who given the cultural sensitivity with searching Iraqi women, went on raids and participated in house searches with infantry soldiers.

The film is scheduled to be aired on PBS stations sometime in November. I would encourage everyone to view this documentary since it will help each of us appreciate and understand the frontline combat contributions being made by many Operation Enduring Freedom / Operation Iraqi Freedom (OEF/OIF) women veterans and the challenges they face upon their return home.



Dr. Irene Trowell-Harris, Director of the Center for Women Veterans, will be our keynote speaker at the August 8<sup>th</sup> CalVet Women Veterans Conference, which is being held in Sacramento. She will provide updates on the Summit as well as other topics related to women veterans. Since the conference is limited to 200 attendees, I would suggest getting your registration forms in early. The conference brochure and program may be downloaded from CalVet’s website at: [www.calvet.ca.gov](http://www.calvet.ca.gov).



The California Department of Veterans Affairs has pursued several important pieces of legislation which will benefit all veterans. Please check out our legislative section for the latest updates. I am very excited about the upcoming conference and look forward to meeting many of you next month. Please feel free to contact our Women Veterans phone line for assistance at 916-653-2551.

**Barbara Ward**

*Deputy Secretary for Women and Minority Veterans Affairs*

## Meeting “Doc” cont:

Tears flowed down her cheeks as she explained how torn she was about leaving Iraq. On one hand, she was anxious about leaving “her” Marines behind... who would care for them? On the other hand, she left a 3-month-old baby girl behind when she deployed. Her baby was now a toddler, learning to walk and to say her first words while she was away. She said she was excited about seeing her daughter and husband again.

Even though her wounds were serious and she may never be able to walk again unassisted, she didn’t regret a moment spent in Iraq and she would go back in a heartbeat to finish her tour. It broke her heart to leave behind the Marines for whom she felt so responsible. I felt blessed and honored to have had the chance to visit with her, comfort her, and bear witness to her story.



## National Survey of Women Veterans

The United States Department of Veterans Affairs’ (USDVA) Office of Public Health and Environmental Hazards is sponsoring a National Survey of Women Veterans. This survey is part of a study to improve women’s health care through the USDVA.

The purpose of the study is to understand women veterans’ use of health care, including what they like and what they would change about the health care they receive, even if that care is not at a USDVA Medical Center.

This nationwide survey of women veterans is being conducted in the summer of 2008. Please participate in this survey if you receive a phone call requesting your participation.

# Lt. Gen. Ann Dunwoody Nominated To Receive 4th Star

Lt. Col. Anne Edgecomb  
[WWW.ARMY.MIL](http://WWW.ARMY.MIL)

On June 23, 2008, the Defense Department announced that Lt. Gen. Ann E. Dunwoody had been nominated for appointment to the rank of general and assignment as U.S. Army Materiel Command commanding general.

If confirmed by Congress, Dunwoody would become the first woman in the U.S. Armed Forces to attain the rank of general. Approximately five percent of general officers in the Army are women, which includes mobilized Army Reserve and Army National Guard general officers.

"Lt. Gen. Dunwoody's leadership, character and career have best prepared her to lead the Army Materiel Command," said Secretary of the Army Pete Geren. "She will bring 33 years of experience to over 56 thousand Soldiers, DA Civilians, and their Families in 40 states and 50 countries as she serves as the next commanding general of Army Materiel Command."

Prior to taking her current assignment as deputy commanding general and chief of staff, U.S. Army Materiel Command at Fort Belvoir, Va., Dunwoody served as the deputy chief of staff, G-4 at the Pentagon. She was responsible for ensuring war fighters had the necessary supplies and services, and that logisticians had the tools and equipment necessary to deliver those supplies and services to Soldiers around the globe.

"This is an important day for the Dunwoody family, the military and the Nation," said Gen. George W. Casey, Chief of Staff of the Army. "Lt. Gen. Dunwoody's nomination not only underscores her

significant contributions and success throughout 33 years of service, but also shows the level of possible opportunity in our Army's diverse, quality all-volunteer force. Our Nation will continue to benefit from Lt. Gen. Dunwoody's leadership as the Army continues to build strength from our diversity."

Dunwoody, a native of New York, received a direct commission after graduating from the State University of New York in 1975. Since her first assignment in 1976 as a platoon leader at Fort Sill, Okla., Dunwoody has commanded at every level. Dunwoody comes from a family with a long tradition of military service, including her great grandfather, grandfather, father, brother, sister, niece and husband.

"I am much honored but also very humbled today with this announcement," said Dunwoody. "I grew up in a family that didn't know what glass ceilings were. This nomination only reaffirms what I have known to be true about the military throughout my career that the doors continue to open for men and women in uniform. My focus right now is to be the best deputy I can be."

Dunwoody's awards and badges include the Distinguished Service Medal, Defense Superior Service Medal, Legion of Merit, Defense Meritorious Service Medal, Meritorious Service Medal, Army Commendation Medal, Army Achievement Medal, Master Parachutist Badge, Parachutist Rigger Badge and the Army Staff Identification Badge.

<http://www.army.mil/-newsreleases/2008/06/23/10287-lt-gen-dunwoody-nominated-to-receive-4th-star/>



## Department of Defense and National Association of Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies Partner to Provide Child Care

The National Association of Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies (NACCRRRA) is working with the Department of Defense (DOD) to help those who serve in the military find affordable child care that suits their unique needs.

Through several innovative civilian/military efforts among DOD, NACCRRRA & Child Care Resource & Referral agencies, these agencies are building the quality and capacity of child care throughout the country. For more information contact the National Association of Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies at [www.naccrra.org](http://www.naccrra.org).

## CRB Conducts California Survey on Women Veterans

The California Commission on the Status of Women and Assemblymember Lois Wolk (D-Dem) have requested that the California Research Bureau prepare a report for state policymakers to assist them in identifying and meeting the needs of California's women veterans, given their increasing numbers and unique issues.

The report, "*Meeting the Needs of California's Women Veterans*" will describe specific issues, service needs and existing gaps. This report is anticipated to be published in late summer 2008.

Please participate by taking the survey online at: [http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=GtoODw5nnXZzd5hm0\\_2fweXw\\_3d\\_3d](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=GtoODw5nnXZzd5hm0_2fweXw_3d_3d).

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## Subscribe To This Newsletter:

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## California Native American Day

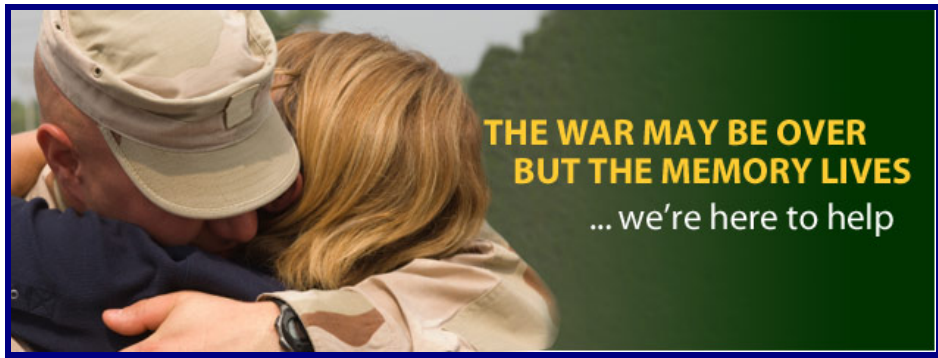
This year's event is divided into two parts. The first is the week-long California Indian Cultural Awareness Conference, designed specifically for students and teachers. The second is a free, open-to-the-public California Native American Day celebration on Friday, Sept. 28 from 6pm until 9pm. Both events take place at California State University San Bernardino.

During California Native American Day, students and educators alike will discover the hundreds of Indian tribes that call California home and learn about their indigenous history. This experience will help promote an awareness and appreciation for all cultures including that of California's Native Americans. [www.nativeamericanday.com](http://www.nativeamericanday.com)





# The Soldiers Project



Submitted by The Soldiers Project

The Soldiers Project offers free psychological counseling for any military service member or veteran who has served in Operation Iraqi Freedom / Operation Enduring Freedom (OIF/OEF). We also offer free counseling for any of their loved ones (girlfriends, boyfriends, spouses, partners, children, parents and grandparents). All of our counseling is free and confidential. We have no red tape, and no limit to the number of sessions offered. Our therapists (psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers and marriage and family therapists) come to educational sessions on topics such as combat trauma, military sexual trauma, the deployment cycle, and issues for military families.

We see individuals, couples, children, and families. Our clients have included gay and lesbian veterans. We began in Los Angeles County, and we now have therapists available in Orange County as well. We are currently expanding to Ventura and San Diego counties, as well. Many of our therapist volunteers are women, and the group was founded by Judith Broder, MD.

We are available to active duty military and their families prior to, during or following deployment. For example, one of our therapists may see a man while his wife is deployed, and then may see them as a couple when she returns. Or, one of our therapists may support a wife during her husband's deployment. When her husband comes home, she may wish to continue seeing her therapist, but ask for a different therapist for her husband, to help with combat trauma and reintegration issues. We will see any OIF or OEF vet and/or his or her loved ones, regardless of when they served in those conflicts.

In the past year, we have seen more than 100 people. We are seeing veterans with combat trauma (depression, nightmares, anxiety, flashbacks, temper problems, substance abuse, grief, etc.). We have seen women with military sexual trauma or military sexual harassment. Some people are having difficulty adjusting to being home, or difficulty adjusting to being out of the military. Some are having problems with their children or teenagers, or their marriage or relationship. We see people, who had difficult childhoods, and sometimes the war trauma and the childhood trauma have merged together – we help them understand and sort these things out.

We want to help. Please see our website, [www.thesoldiersproject.org](http://www.thesoldiersproject.org), for more information. To set up an appointment with a therapist, please call 818 761-7438. Your call will normally be returned within 24 hours, and you will usually be matched with a therapist within a few days.

The Soldiers Project also has a Speakers' Bureau. If you would like one of us to speak to your group, please contact us at 877-576-5343.



## 2008 Legislation Sponsored By CalVet

### **AB 3065 (Committee on Veterans Affairs) Veterans Employment in Civil Service**

Currently, veterans who are not in state civil service can only take open, non-promotional exams, for which they are given preference points. This bill will allow veterans who have retired from active military service, were honorably discharged from service with a service-connected disability or were honorably discharged from active duty, access to promotional exams consistent with their qualifications and experience. No preference points will be awarded for promotional exams under this bill.

### **SB 1455 (Cogdill) Gold Star Family License Plates**

This bill would authorize a person who is a family member of a member of the United States Armed Forces who was killed while serving on active duty in the military, to apply for a Special Recognition License Plate. The License Plates would contain a gold star and the words "Gold Star Family." This bill would not impact the General Fund because all of the costs of producing the license plates (estimated \$300,000) would come from private donations to the Gold Star Family License Plate Account. This bill has been amended to satisfy the concerns of the Senate Committee on Transportation and Housing and has no opposition.

### **SB 1675 (Cox) Veterans Debenture Act of 1970**

This bill would provide specific authority for the Veterans' Debenture Finance Committee (the Governor, State Controller, State Treasurer, Director of Finance and Secretary of Veterans Affairs) to delegate bond structuring authority to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs and for CDVA to issue variable rate CalVet Veterans Revenue bonds to provide funds for its Home Loan Program. There is no fiscal impact to the state's general fund. The CalVet Home Loan Program is a self-supported bond enterprise fund. This bill will enable the program to reduce its debt service costs on revenue bonds and provide savings to the CalVet homeowners.

### **SB 1572 (Wyland) Veterans Bond Act of 2008**

This bill would lead to the Veterans Bond Act of 2008 on the November ballot to authorize the issuance of \$900 million in State of California General Obligation Bonds to provide for the continuation of the CalVet Home Loan program, which is administered by the California Department of Veterans Affairs. The CalVet Home Loan program has always been self-supporting. There has never been an adverse impact on the State General Fund. Throughout its history, the CalVet program has been totally supported by the participating veterans at no direct cost to the taxpayer. The CalVet Farm and Home Loan program has helped more than 400,000 California veterans buy a home or farm since its beginning in 1924.



**Veterans: You may be eligible for a 30-Year Home Loan.**

**Contact CalVet at 866-653-2510 or visit**

**[www.calvet.ca.gov/calvetloans](http://www.calvet.ca.gov/calvetloans) for more information.**

# CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

## ***CALVET WOMEN VETERANS CONFERENCE: "CONTINUING OUR LEGACY"***

**Friday, August 8, 2008**



**Lions Gate Hotel  
3410 Westover  
McClellan, CA 95652  
(Sacramento)**

**ADMISSION IS FREE**

**REGISTER EARLY  
[WWW.CALVET.CA.GOV](http://WWW.CALVET.CA.GOV)**

### **AGENDA**

**7:00 a.m. REGISTRATION AND CONTINENTAL BREAKFAST**

**8:00 a.m. CONFERENCE OPENING**

**8:45 a.m. CHANGING TRENDS FOR MILITARY WOMEN**

**10:00 a.m. BREAK**

**10:15 a.m. OVERVIEW OF POST TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER AND MILITARY SEXUAL TRAUMA**

**11:00 a.m. VA WOMEN HEALTH CARE PROGRAMS**

**11:45 a.m. LUNCH – KEYNOTE SPEAKER: Dr. Irene Trowell-Harris**  
Director U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Center for Women Veterans

**1:00 p.m. WORKSHOPS (Session 1)**

- General Women's Health Issues
- Employment Assistance and Opportunities
- VA State and Federal Benefits; Claims Process
- Coping With PTSD and Military Sexual Trauma

**2:00 p.m. BREAK**

**2:15 p.m. WORKSHOPS (Session 2)**

- General Women's Health Issues
- Employment Assistance and Opportunities
- VA State and Federal Benefits; Claims Process
- Coping With PTSD and Military Sexual Trauma

**3:15 p.m. OPEN FORUM**  
California Commission on the Status of Women

**4:30 p.m. CONFERENCE CLOSE AND RAFFLE**

**MEET WITH COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY REPRESENTATIVES DURING THE DAY-LONG EDUCATIONAL FAIRE**

## Four Members Appointed to Mexican American Veterans' Memorial Beautification and Enhancement Commission

On May 23, Governor Schwarzenegger announced the appointments of Secretary Rosario Marin, Daniel Morales, John Ochoa and Robert Ruiz Jr. as members of the Mexican American Veterans' Memorial Beautification and Enhancement Commission.

"California Veterans of Hispanic Heritage have courageously served their country throughout our history. It is important for us to recognize these men and women for the sacrifices they have made to ensure American freedoms are protected and safety is guaranteed," said Schwarzenegger.

Marin, of Huntington Park, has served as secretary of the State and Consumer Services Agency since 2006. Prior to that, she served as chair of the California Integrated Waste Management Board from 2004 to 2006. From 2001 to 2003, Marin was treasurer of the United States.

Morales, of Sacramento, has served as the operation sergeant major for the California Military Department for Emergency Plans and Operations since 2005. From 2002 to 2004, he was a senior administrator for the 1106<sup>th</sup> Aviation Classification Repair Activity Depot.

Ochoa, of Sacramento, has served as a strategic planning consultant to the California Department of Veterans Affairs since 2006. From 1994 to 2006, he served as chief of the community services division, manager of field operations and senior analyst for the Community Services Block Grant program for the Department of Community Services and Development.

Ruiz, of Elk Grove, most recently was manager of the wage garnishment office for EdFund from 1991 until he retired in 2002. From 1985 to 1991, he was in a career executive assignment for the division of veterans services and was also manager of the management analysis office for the California Department of Veterans Affairs.

The California Mexican American Veterans' Memorial Beautification and Enhancement Commission was established in 1993 to formalize a non-governmental committee of citizens actively involved in raising money for the maintenance and enhancement of a memorial for Mexican American veterans. Last year, the Governor signed SB 599 authorizing the commission to establish a schedule for the design, construction and dedication of the memorial in consultation with the Department of General Services, the secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Governor. The legislation also reorganized the commission from 11 members to seven, with five members appointed by the Governor, one member appointed by the President pro Tempore of the Senate and one member appointed by the Speaker of the Assembly.

**Veterans: You may be eligible for  
a real 30-Year Loan at 5.45%**

**CALVET**  
HOME LOANS

- ◆ CalVet is offering a home loan to eligible veterans at an interest rate of 5.45% for 30 years.
- ◆ For purchase of single-family homes including condominiums and mobile or manufactured homes on individually owned parcels.
- ◆ Must be classified as honorably discharged. Wartime service not required.
- ◆ Price and income limits will apply.
- ◆ Active duty may be eligible with a previous honorable discharge and qualify as a first-time home buyer or are purchasing in a target area.

Contact the Sacramento District Office at 866.653.2510 for eligibility information or visit [www.cdva.ca.gov/calvetloans](http://www.cdva.ca.gov/calvetloans) for other offices

Rates are subjected to change so that applicants are encouraged to check the website for the current rates and availability.





## Upcoming Events in 2008

### JULY

- July 25      Ventura County Stand Down at the National Guard Armory in Ventura
- July 28-30    Yuba-Sutter Stand Down at River Front Park in Marysville

### AUGUST

- August 7-10   East Bay Stand Down at Alameda County Fairgrounds in Pleasanton
- August 8      **CalVet Women Veterans Conference at the Lionsgate Hotel in Sacramento**

### SEPTEMBER

- Sept. 14-18   National Association of State Directors of Veterans Affairs Training Conference at the Napa Valley Marriott
- Sept. 28      Native American Day Observance at CSU San Bernardino from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m.
- Sept. 28 – Oct 3   National Association of Black Military Women's 16<sup>th</sup> Biennial Reunion in Las Vegas



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